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Hong Kong Daily Press.

ESTABLISHED 1857.

No. 11,604

號四百六十一萬一第一

日六十二月三日一十二精光

HONGKONG SATURDAY, APRIL 30, 1895.

大清國

城十二月四號香港

PRISE \$2½ PER MONTH

NOTICE

Communications, reports & advertisements, Subscriptions, Printing, Binding, etc. should be addressed to the Proprietor, and all social business matters to the Manager.

Advertisements and Subscriptions, which are not ordered for a fixed period will be retained until payment is made.

Only extra copies of the "Daily Press" should be sent before 11 a.m. on the day of publication.

After that hour the supply is limited. Only supplied for Cash.

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NEW ADVERTISEMENTS

HONGKONG AMATEUR DRAMATIC CLUB.

THE MAGISTRATE will be given at the THEATRE ROYAL, CITY HALL, ON WEDNESDAY, the 24th April, at 9 p.m.

THE PROCEEDS OF THE EXTRA PERFORMANCE WILL BE HANDED TO THE HONGKONG BENEFICENT SOCIETY.

Books can be booked for Cash only at the HONGKONG OFFICE of the THEATRE ROYAL on and after MONDAY, and 22nd April, at 10 a.m.

NO CHIPS TAKEN. Hongkong, 20th April, 1895.

THEATRE ROYAL CITY HALL.

GRAND HISTRIONIC AND DRAMATIC TREAT,

Commencing

THURSDAY, 25th April, 1895.

MISS GRACE HAWTHORNE, And Company of 20 Artists in a Selection of the latest Society Plays of the Day, viz.—

"Lady Windermere," "A Woman of no Importance," "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," "Theshire," "Captain Swift," "The Lodger," "The New Guy," "Mamma," "Dandy Dick," "Silver King," "Lights of London," "Barber Ligh."

Train after Performances.

BOX OFFICE at KENT, WALSH, LTD., Hongkong, 20th April, 1895.

VICTORIA CHAPTER, No. 221.

A REGULAR CONVENTION of the above CHAPTER will be held at the FRIERNMANS' HALL, Zetland Street, on WEDNESDAY, the 24th inst., at 8 or 8:30 p.m. precisely. Visitors' Companies are cordially invited to attend.

Hongkong, 20th April, 1895.

HONGKONG SKY RACES WILL BE HELD AT THE RACE COURSE TO-DAY (SATURDAY), 20th April.

FIRST SADDLING SHOT will be Run at 1:30 P.M. Sharp.

ADMISSION TO THE GRAND STAND AND ENCLOSURE, \$1.00.

TICKETS \$1 can be obtained from Messrs. KELLY & WALSH, LTD.

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The Government would have on the 1st instant, a memorandum on the subject, as far as it has gone, has been forwarded to Her Majesty's Secretary of State, for transmission to the Foreign Office.

INSANITARY CONDITION OF HONGKONG.—The past and present condition of a long voyage from a sanitary standpoint is reviewed at considerable length in the accompanying letter.

SUGGESTS RECONSTRUCTION OF THE GAP.

The Government was good enough to place before the Committee Messrs. G. W. Sons & Matthews' report on the above-mentioned, asking for an expression of opinion on its practicability of adopting the recommendations contained therein. As the report suggests such drastic measures in the removal and rebuilding of the lighthouses on another part of the island, it is expected that \$130,000 of the Committee's money will be required. The funds in their possession were not prepared to suggest so serious an undertaking as above referred to, as it appears to them that in the apparent absence of any structural defect other remedies less costly might be tried. The question is really of a very important character and in the opinion of the Committee, the Government will do well to secure the expert assistance of officers who have had varied experience in the construction of lighthouses along the coast of China, would render their opinions of this utmost value.

POSTAGE RATE TO NEIGHBOURING PORTS.

A wide discrepancy exists between the rates charged to neighbouring ports, such as Manila, and more distant places, but on pointing this out to the Government, the Chamber was informed that for such an unduly charged port as Manila, the postage rate to the Postal Union rates. The inconsistency is the most striking when it is remembered that letters are carried usually by a manorial charge, while the conveyance of mail to Great Britain necessitates the paying of heavy subsidies, as well as making very considerable returns to the Indian and French Governments.

STORM WARNING FROM GAP ROCK.

Mr. Denys said he was the Director of Hongkong Observatory, then reporting on the typhoon of 23rd September, 1894, and referring to the inadequate telegraph connection between the Gap Rock and Hongkong, pointed out that communication was discontinued at 4 p.m., and not resumed again until 7 o'clock on the following morning, an arrangement which he very justly considered most seriously detracted from the usefulness of the station as a point for the inspection of the typhoon. He suggested that communication should be made as far as possible on times, and on this being brought to the notice of the Government, His Excellency the Governor was good enough to issue instructions for the continuous transmission of messages in regard to storms, whenever the authorities at the Observatory may consider it necessary.

THREE PASSES.—The attention of the Committee has again been directed to this important question, and a Sub-Committee was appointed to fully investigate it. A considerable amount of correspondence has taken place, but it does not at present seem advisable in the interest of those engaged in the trade in foreign goods to make the letter public.

MEMOIRS OF THE CHAMBER'S REPRESENTATIVE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.—At a special general meeting of the members of the Chamber the Honourable A. McCouchie, was elected to take the place of the Honourable H. Whitehead in the Legislative Council during his absence from the colony.

Mr. H. H. Joseph retired on his departure from the colony, and Mr. A. G. Wood is at present acting on leave. The Honourable A. McCouchie, the Chamber's representative in the Legislative Council, was asked to join the Committee.

The Committee deeply regret to have to record the loss of Mr. H. H. Joseph, a much valued colleague, who was for many years associated with the Chamber. Mr. A. G. Wood has been invited to join the Committee.

HONORABLE MEMBERS.—During the year 1894 Mr. A. G. Wood and Mr. G. W. Sons & Matthews, and Mr. G. Payne, have been added to the list of members.—Messrs. A. H. Reuter, The Hongkong Land Investment and Agency Co., Ltd., Bradley & Co., G. H. Wheeler, Victoria & New York Standard Oil Company, Shaw & Co., and The Mitsui Busan Kaihatsu.

FINANCE.—The accounts for the year ending 31st December, issued by Mr. J. Thomas, Comptroller of the Exchequer, show a balance at the end of the year of \$1,375,166 with a fixed deposit of \$15,253, and a special fixed deposit, namely \$15,000, both amounts being in the hands of the Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation.

THE GROUNDING OF THE "POLYphemus."

OFFICIAL INQUIRY.—Yesterday a Marine Court of Inquiry was held at the British Consulate, the inquiry respecting the circumstances connected with the grounding of the British steamer "Polyphemus," at Jubilee Island, on the 14th inst.

The Court consisted of Commander R. Murray Ramsey, Lt.-Col. Sir W. L. Lowe, M.A., M.R.C.S., Undeclared; Mr. F. W. Lowe, R.N., M.A.S., Undeclared; Mr. G. Payne, member of the British steamship "Kedong"; Mr. John Edward Farrell, master of the British steamer "Mangrove"; Mr. J. Clark, master of the British steamer "Bella"; Mr. A. Clark, master of the British steamer "Bella"; Mr. William Johnson, chief engineer of the ship, and the official number of the ship is 97,812, of Liverpool.

Mr. A. B. Johnson appeared to watch the case on behalf of Messrs. Butterfield & Swire.

Commander R. M. Ramsey read a letter from Messrs. Butterfield & Swire asking for the inquiry to be held and also the warrant for the holding of the Court.

The first witness was Mr. William Thorne, C. 100431 issued at Liverpool in 1884. I have not the certificates here; it is on board the ship. I was appointed acting master of the "Polyphemus" at Singapore on 1st April, 1894, and had the command of the ship on the 2nd of April with general cargo for Hongkong and Japan. We had very fine weather, smooth seas and light winds, and there was no encounter with or against us till 6th April when we passed Manila, when the current set N. 25 degrees E. 11 miles per hour, on the next day we had the same weather with no current. We kept our usual watches on the way, and at 4 a.m. on the morning of the 11th I signalled the ship to stop, and the engine was stopped. The ship was slightly astern.

I saw a steamer coming towards a good distance off on the starboard bow. The weather being hazy, I soon signalled her if she should remain on the bridge, and I told him I wished he would, and I took castings. The sounding proved 20 fathoms, shoals. At 4.30 it became foggy, and I slowed down to half speed. We then sounded 23 fathoms, and at 4.45 I reduced the engine to slow, and at 5 o'clock a midshipman officer took over the steering. I did not receive a report of this sounding until after the ship struck.

At 5.10 we reduced to slow. The gap rock fog signal was heard then for the first time on the port bow. As soon as I heard the fog gun I reversed the engines full speed, because I knew from the nearness of the sound that we were up to the rock.

The ship was slightly astern.

When the fog cleared we were half a mile south of Jubilee Islands. After I

had taken the water in No. 1 hold twice, and closed the water in No. 1 hold twice, I called his attention to the fact that the water had not appeared to be damaged, but I found that the valve had been knocked off, and I thought the water had got into No. 1 hold through the shins. The water in the tank had been up to the level of the bottom of the tank, but was full of bubbles up to the bulkhead, but no water got into the bulkhead. The "Polyphemus" had not think it was necessary to put anything over the bows, because owing to the touch being slight, I did not think much damage had been done to her. I did not see the light at the Gap Rock at all. I did not hear the fog signal until five o'clock. After I heard it I waited in it about fifteen minutes. The interval should have been ten minutes.

I turned the fog signals.

COMMANDER RAMSEY.—Experts have various opinions about the sound of signals in a fog. At any rate you did not hear the gun until 10.15 past 5 p.m.

WITNESS.—No. The ship did not make any noise after I got her back to forward.

THE COURT.—In a private conference, after which the Court was seated to receive the expert assistance of officers, it was decided that the cause of the accident was long and varied, experience in the construction of lighthouses along the coast of China would render their opinions of this utmost value.

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COMMANDER RAMSEY.—I consider that two men lost their lives.

WITNESS.—Yes. We were going dead slow.

COMMANDER RAMSEY.—Were you blowing your whistle?

WITNESS.—No.

IN ANSWER TO CAPTAIN PAYNE WITNESS said he came to the boat to blow his horn.

CAPTAIN PAYNE.—I did not mention the

fact that you had not heard the signal?

WITNESS.—Only to the second officer. It was owing to the fact that he had heard the signal that we went on to the deck when we should have been in the light of the signal. Did not make any remark about the fact.

COMMANDER RAMSEY.—According to the speed you have given, in ship for some little time must have been within a radius of a mile and a half of Gap Rock.

WITNESS.—Yes. We were going dead slow.

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